The relationship between the work of Charles Dickens and popular literature has often been noted, but the extent to which his fiction and journalism were rooted in, and continued to respond to, the popular radical culture of his time has so far been unexplored. Sally Ledger traces the influence of Regency radicals, such as William Hone and William Cobbett, and mid-century radical writers, such as Douglas Jerrold and the Chartists Ernest Jones and G. W. M. Reynolds. She offers substantial new readings of works from *Pickwick* to *Little Dorrit*, arguing that Dickens’s populism bridged eighteenth- and nineteenth-century conceptions of the ‘popular’, the first identified with the political idea of ‘the People’, the second identified with a mass-market ‘populace’ that emerged during Dickens’s career. Richly illustrated, this study also uncovers the resonance between Dickens’s writings and popular graphic art by George Cruikshank, Robert Seymour, C. J. Grant and others.

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Nineteenth-century British literature and culture have been rich fields for interdisciplinary studies. Since the turn of the twentieth century, scholars and critics have tracked the intersections and tensions between Victorian literature and the visual arts, polities, social organization, economic life, technical innovations, scientific thought – in short, culture in its broadest sense. In recent years, theoretical challenges and historiographical shifts have unsettled the assumptions of previous scholarly synthesis and called into question the terms of older debates. Whereas the tendency in much past literary critical interpretation was to use the metaphor of culture as ‘background’, feminist, Foucauldian, and other analyses have employed more dynamic models that raise questions of power and of circulation. Such developments have reanimated the field. This series aims to accommodate and promote the most interesting work being undertaken on the frontiers of the field of nineteenth-century literary studies: work which intersects fruitfully with other fields of study such as history, or literary theory, or the history of science. Comparative as well as interdisciplinary approaches are welcomed.

A complete list of titles published will be found at the end of the book.
DICKENS AND THE POPULAR RADICAL IMAGINATION

SALLY LEDGER
For Michael Slater
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Note on editions and abbreviations used

For ease of reference, where possible I have used the new Penguin paperback edition of Dickens’s prose works. For *Sketches By Boz*, *The Christmas Books*, and *American Notes* I have used other available editions. I have referred throughout to the Clarendon Press twelve-volume Pilgrim edition of *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, abbreviated in the text to ‘Pilgrim Letters’. Where possible I have used Michael Slater’s four-volume Dent Uniform Edition of *Dickens’ Journalism*, abbreviated thus throughout. Individual items not in Slater I have cited separately. Full references to the relevant volumes of the Pilgrim Letters and to Slater’s edition of the journalism are given in the bibliography.